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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY 0035
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SUBJECT: FRANCE/GAERC: LARGELY IN SYNCH WITH U.S. POSITIONS

REF: REF: STATE 80034

Classified By: A/DCM Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) On June 15, MFA CFSP Deputy Emmanuel Cohet indicated France's general agreement with U.S. views in advance of the June General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meeting. Of note, he said that the EU Common Position on Cuba will not be weakened or strengthened and that decisive action on Kosovo must take place at the UNSC. He noted that the MFA is already preparing for France to assume the EU Presidency in July 2008.

¶2. (C) Cuba: Cohet indicated that there is a consensus in the EU on the double approach of maintaining, even intensifying, dialogue with both the Cuban government and Cuban opposition and civil society. He said this was no real change from the 1996 Common Position, while noting that the 2003 Restrictive Measures would remain suspended.

¶3. (C) Central Asia: Cohet said that whether Central Asian representatives would be invited to the European Council was the prerogative of the EU Presidency. He observed that France will hold the EU Presidency for the second half of 2008, and noted as an aside that workloads have already increased as a result.

¶4. (C) Western Balkans: Cohet stated that Bosnia was not scheduled for discussion. Regarding Serbia, Cohet noted that the EU has reopened negotiations with Serbia on a Stabilization and Association Agreement. He said France agrees on the importance of encouraging Serbia to pursue its EU integration aspirations, while emphasizing the need for Serbia to cooperate with the ICTY. On Kosovo, Cohet said that France's focus is still on what evolves at the UN, as decisive action must take place there. Cohet noted France's agreement on the need for unity of the international community and support for the Ahtissari proposal. He stated again France's "very favorable" view of U.S. participation in the Kosovo ESDP mission, noting that Kosovo would be the largest civil ESDP mission. Within the EU, he said that although there are different sensitivities, there are sufficient convergences of opinion at present for a common EU position.

¶5. (C) Middle East Peace Process: Cohet said that since there is no longer a Palestinian national government, the way forward is not clear. The GAERC will agree on a common text, but it will likely focus on reiterating basic principles, as

the situation bears further watching. France continues to agree with the U.S. on the need for Palestinians to cooperate with President Abbas, condemning the Qassam rocket attacks on Israel, and supporting the Quartet principles. Cohet indicated that questions about assistance to the Palestinians would have to be addressed in the new context.

¶16. (C) Iran: Cohet said that France agrees with the U.S. position, including appreciation for Javier Solana's efforts, regrets that the May 31 meeting was not more productive, and foresees a potential need to take additional appropriate action at the UNSC.

¶17. (C) Sudan: Cohet stated that France's focus is on its proposed ministerial meeting of the Expanded Contact Group. Kouchner traveled to Sudan, has invited his counterparts to convene, and hopes Secretary Rice will participate.

¶18. (C) Ukraine, Moldova, and Russia: Cohet indicated that these topics would not be discussed.

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